

Committee on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom (FWDAF)
Minutes of Meeting
February 18, 2014

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom met at 3:00 pm on February 18, 2014 in Room 324 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Rudy Ortiz presiding.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Ortiz updated the committee on his efforts to encourage diversity in faculty recruitment. Chair Ortiz encouraged committee members who are on school search committees to be cognizant of the diversity provisions in the APM and of candidates' contributions to diversity.

ACTION: Chair Ortiz to attend a future meeting of the Provost and School Deans to discuss diversity in faculty searches.

II. Systemwide Committee Updates

A. University Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (UCAAD).

Chair Ortiz, the FWDAF representative, updated the committee members on UCAAD discussions. UCAAD has recently discussed the HSI initiative. Other UCAAD topics were the APM 210 C and D and updates on faculty salary equity studies. Information from UCOP regarding the salary studies are posted on FWDAF's CROPS site.

B. University Committee on Faculty Welfare (UCFW). Member Linda Cameron, the FWDAF representative, updated the committee members on UCFW discussions. Much of the recent discussion has centered on the new UC health plans. The general consensus is that the plans were not rolled out properly. There is some question about the health coverage for retired faculty members who move out of California. Another item on the UCFW agenda was the UC retirement program (UCRP) and the 2010 plan to ramp up contributions by the UC. This plan was intended to offset the

UCRP deficit but has not yet been established. UCFW will continue to monitor these issues.

FWDAF members briefly discussed the retirement options available to faculty and expressed concern that many faculty members are unaware they can access their own accounts online or speak to a Fidelity representative on the telephone.

- C. University Committee on Academic Freedom (UCAF). In the absence of member Sean Malloy, the FWDAF representative, it was announced that UCAF has no updates as the committee will convene in March.

ACTION: The Academic Personnel office (APO) will be asked if HR can include discussion on the UCRP at future new faculty orientations. The Senate newsletter should include a blurb on where faculty should go to attain more information on Fidelity and retirement account options.

III. Preparation for VP Carlson Visit

Systemwide Vice Provost for Academic Personnel, Susan Carlson, is visiting campus tomorrow as part of the FWDAF/APO faculty seminar series. At noon, she will hold an open forum for all faculty on the topic of faculty mentoring. FWDAF was granted its own meeting with VP Carlson later in the afternoon and committee members discussed the topics they would like to address with her:

--What components could UC Merced adopt from the faculty mentoring programs of other UC campuses?

--What are some strategies that faculty, chairs, and deans could use to promote diversity in hiring? What are the best practices for diversity in hiring that UC Merced should adopt? How should UC Merced handle questions of diversity since we are the only UC campus without a diversity officer?

--How can UC Merced encourage more cluster hires and targets of opportunity hires?

--What are some strategies for faculty retention?

FWDAF members also held a brief discussion on the President's Post Doctoral Fellowship program and the additional increase in funding. The funding includes a provision for start up packages. This is a positive addition but faculty still face the challenge of determining space needs when trying to hire a post doc.

IV. Livescan

Chair Ortiz Rudy provided an overview of the process and function of Livescan. There is currently a proposal to use Livescan for employees who work with controlled substances.

ACTION: This item was tabled until the March meeting.

V. WASC

Prior to this meeting, when responding to the Senate Chair's request for Senate standing committees to review the new WASC Core Competency expectations, FWDAF submitted a memo stating its ongoing concerns about the influence of WASC over faculty curriculum. FWDAF members pointed out the heavy workload burden on faculty as they try to fulfill their accreditation duties.

ACTION: This item was tabled until the March meeting.

VI. Funding Concerns

Prior to this meeting, the Committee on Research (COR) submitted memos to the Senate Chair requesting an increase in the amount of funding for the annual Senate faculty grants, and, the establishment of bridge funding or emergency funding for faculty members.

FWDAF members expressed interest in working with COR on these issues. In addition to the absence of bridge funding, there is no funding for faculty

who work on innovative projects. A committee member pointed out the lack of adequate funding for graduate students and the negative impact on PIs. Another committee member suggested that the Senate should ask the Graduate Division about matching funds for a GSR so that PIs can allow graduate students to devote their time solely to research. Committee members then held a brief discussion on indirect cost return.

ACTION: Chair Ortiz will speak with COR Chair Ruth Mostern about combining the committees' efforts on the issue of faculty funding. VCR Sam Traina will be invited to the March FWDAF meeting to speak about indirect cost return.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm

Attest: Rudy Ortiz, Chair

Minutes prepared by: Simrin Takhar, Senate Senior Analyst